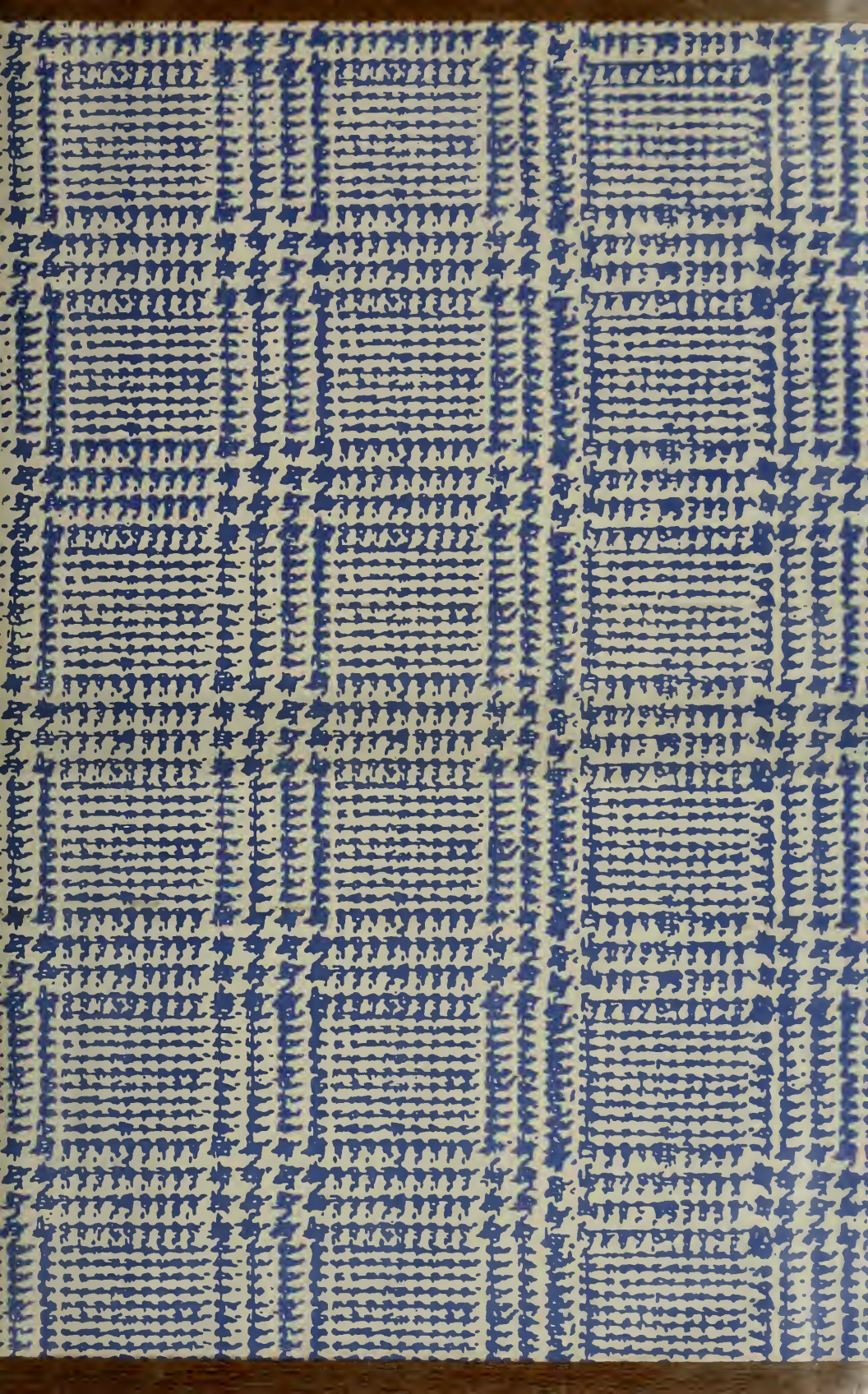
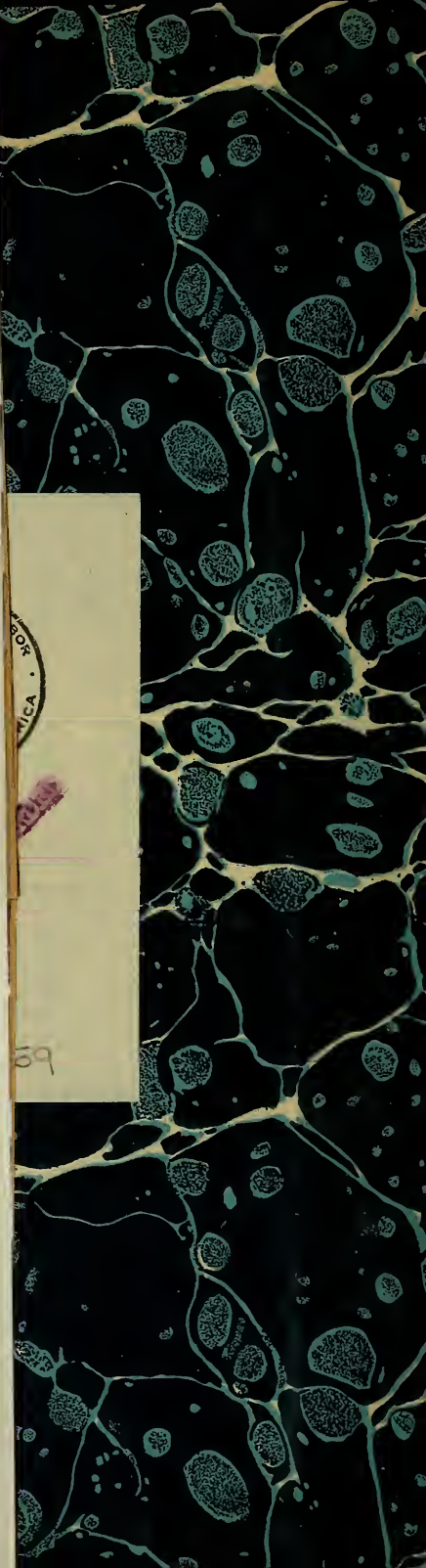
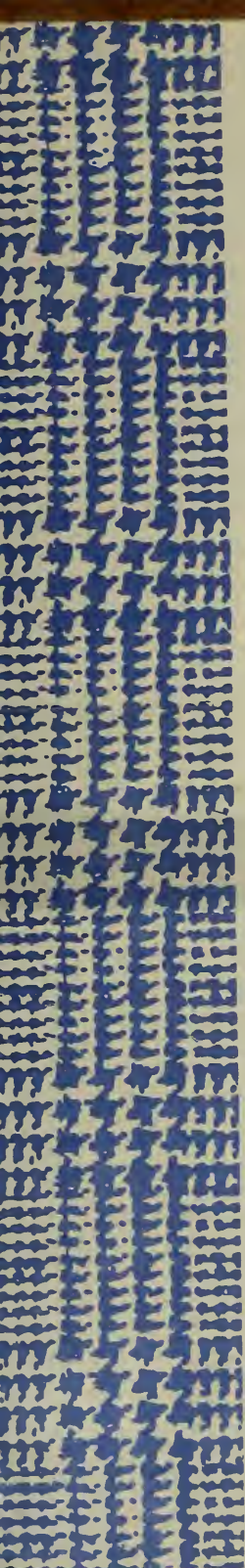






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National Committee for Prevention of  
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News letter: 33-59: 1921-1926.

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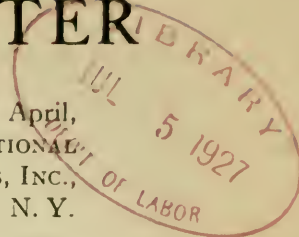


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# THE NEWS LETTER

Published five times a year, in February, April, June, October, and December, by the NATIONAL COMMITTEE for the PREVENTION OF BLINDNESS, INC., at 130 East Twenty-second Street, New York, N. Y.



NUMBER 39

NEW YORK, N. Y.

DECEMBER, 1922

There is no time better than the Christmas season for encouraging a feeling of goodwill and fellowship. The December NEWS LETTER goes forth bearing the Christmas message of inspiration from each to all and all to each. It is embodied in the words of Dr. Stephen S. Wise:

"It seems to me that the thing that we have got to do in our life today is to extend—not so much to vary—but to extend the meaning of the word 'chivalry.' The old chivalry that lends itself to picturization, *that* perhaps is gone, and I think happily and blessedly. It was the chivalry that for the most part is limited to an act, but I think there is a new chivalry in the life of the world today. I think the biggest and finest thing in the world today is collective chivalry—collective and permanent chivalry—not of a single, lurid act, but the chivalry of a permanent, changeless, resistless attitude. The chivalrous thing is not for one man to help a man who suffers; it is for all to avert the suffering of the many—that is the new and higher chivalry."

## THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR THE PREVENTION OF BLINDNESS

If everyone interested in saving sight could have attended the annual meeting, held in the Russell Sage Foundation Building, November 23d, 1922, a great wave of enthusiasm would have swept over the country. As it is, those who were fortunate enough to be present will form centers for broadcasting the inspiration.

Mr. William Fellowes Morgan, President, welcomed the members and their friends. Mr. Edward M. Van Cleve, Managing Director, gave a most encouraging report of the year's work, showing a broadening out of lines of interest and a constantly increasing membership. Mr. Lewis H. Carris, Field Secretary, outlined the course of events and indicated programs for increased usefulness in field work.

A message of goodwill was sent by Miss Helen Keller, who was prevented by illness from attending.

Miss Loaiza Cordero, head of the work for the blind in Porto Rico, spoke of the work there, and particularly of the campaign for prevention of blindness conducted last winter:

"It was the first time in the history of the island that such a campaign

was carried out," said Miss Cordero. "In Porto Rico, as in many other countries, the problem of the blind has been overlooked, not because of any prejudice against it but because of lack of knowledge and perhaps of means. . . . The campaign undertaken by the National Committee was the beginning of a great work to be done. The representatives of the committee visited nineteen towns, holding conferences, exhibiting films, distributing literature—in a word, spreading the teachings of how blindness may be prevented. The people responded wonderfully, and some towns asked us to go there again. In San Juan, for example, four different meetings were held, and the interest of parents and children was great.

"Of course, the results of an educational campaign can never be expressed in words or stated in figures, but I can assure you that we are very much obliged to the Children's Bureau and the National Committee for their coöperation in awakening our people to the fact that the problem of blindness can be solved if we take the trouble of working at it, and that blindness is not a curse but in most cases the result of ignorance and negligence and poverty."

The principal address of the meeting was given by Dr. Stephen S. Wise. It was evident from the beginning that he was thoroughly familiar with his subject, "What is and ought to be the Attitude of the Public toward the Very Important Blindness Prevention Movement." In addition to the quotation already given, he said in part:

"It happened to be my fortune to go to the Near East and Palestine this summer. My wife, children, and I went to Egypt and Palestine. Nearly ten years ago we went for the first time—just before the World War. Joyous as was that pilgrimage in every way, and inspiring as it all was, we were quite unexpectedly saddened by one thing, namely, the enormous measure of blindness in the Near East. I have tried to convey to people sometimes how much blindness I came upon. I think I do not exaggerate when I say that I came upon more persons blind in the course of a week in Cairo and Alexandria than in America in fifty years, outside, of course, of institutions. Every street offered the aspect of some blind woman or man being led about, as a rule, in a rather hapless and even cruel fashion. In Jerusalem I came across the same thing. I had never understood the many allusions in the Bible to the blind until I had been in the Near East.

"I want to say something truly joyous to you, as it was joy bringing to me, but I dare say you know something about it, because you are in touch with all the aspects of this subject the world over. I want you to share with me this comforting thing, that within the ten years between my visits there has been an enormous, a very enormous, gain. I think nothing in my days in Egypt and Palestine this summer brought me quite so much satisfaction as to see that at last a dent had been made in the problem—thanks to the high wisdom of the British administration. In the long time of Turkish rule of Palestine there was a terrific amount of trachoma. Under British rule there has been begun a really marvelous banding together against trachoma.

"Now, if the far-off lands of the Bible within ten years can bring about a very obvious gain in dealing with blindness, how much more ought we to accomplish here in modern America—how much more effective ought we

to become in our struggle against preventable blindness, seeing that, after all, we have the resources and we have wide-spread if not perfect literacy.

"Nothing that I can say to you is new, but the thing that has always been quite extraordinary to me is the attitude, the long-lasting, century-old attitude of helplessness on the part of the world in relation to blindness. As you best know, little more than a half a century ago the beginning was made and we came to see that helplessness was hopelessness and must be banished, and under God could be banished from the blind, but that was only half of the victory.

"I think one of the few gains of the war—there haven't been too many as yet—is that many of us who hadn't known how helpful, hopeful, and wondrous the life of the blind might become were enabled to learn that as a result of the tragedy.

"Too often we take it for granted that the world without is keeping pace with us. We talk about the prevention of blindness and we assume that the man on the street knows and that he cares. I speak of this because I think that the best part of the work of the Committee for the Prevention of Blindness lies in its revealing, revealing the enormous needs—thank God, the not less enormous possibilities—that inhere in this effort.

"I know that it is said that health is purchasable, but it can't be purchased with and by money alone. Do you know that health is holiness—that health is to be had or to be purchased chiefly through care? And care is what? Well, in one word, it is pre-vision. If we have pre-vision, others need not be denied vision; if we have insight and foresight, many, many of our loved fellow humans need not lose sight. Forevision, or pre-vision, means, really, to use the language that is more current, imagination. The man who imagines is the man who foresees the things that are not immediately visible. So imagination is the thing that is needed—imagination, care, love, the understanding, the inescapable imperative of social obligation.

"As for tuberculosis, we prevent or we may cure. With blindness we must prevent; it is not curable—it is preventable. Many men and women who are blind serve and sacrifice gloriously, but from our point of view we either prevent blindness or we suffer it to come to pass and we make ourselves responsible.

"If the Near East can do what it has and is doing, what ought we to do?"

The Nominating Committee presented the following as members of the Board of Directors for the term 1922-1925:

|                            |                            |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Mr. George Blagden         | Dr. F. Park Lewis          |
| Dr. Colman W. Cutler       | Mr. Ira A. Place           |
| Mr. Cleveland H. Dodge     | Dr. William Campbell Posey |
| Miss Martha Lincoln Draper | Miss Louisa Lee Schuyler   |
| Mr. John M. Glenn          | Mr. Edward M. Van Cleve    |

All were unanimously elected.

Honorable Lewis T. Bryant, Commissioner of Labor of the State of New Jersey, was elected to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Miss Julia Lathrop.

The following resolutions were offered and carried:

WHEREAS, The increasing number of cases of blindness due to the drinking of liquors containing wood alcohol which have been brought to the attention of the National Committee for the Prevention of Blindness during the last year indicate the growing seriousness of the wood alcohol menace, and

WHEREAS, there are on all sides evidences of the fact that the eyes of children in both elementary and secondary schools are not being properly safeguarded, and

WHEREAS, reports received by this committee indicate that there still exist in many localities of the United States, particularly in the Indian reservations, centers of trachoma infection which constitute a menace not only to those communities, but to the country at large, and

WHEREAS, the city of New York, by reducing the number of cases of trachoma among its school children from 8,798 to 345 within the last few years, has demonstrated that it is possible almost to accomplish the extinction of this eye disease,

*Therefore*, be it hereby resolved by the members of the National Committee for the Prevention of Blindness, assembled at the annual meeting of the committee,

First, that a communication be sent to the President of the United States and to the governors of the several states suggesting the advisability of national and state legislation, or regulation through existing bodies, which will place such restrictions on the manufacture, transportation, and sale of wood alcohol as will minimize the possibility of the use of that product for other than industrial purposes.

Second, that a communication be sent to the National Education Association, the United States Commissioner of Education, and to the various state superintendents of schools calling their attention to the need for the following improvements:

- (a) Adequate lighting, both natural and artificial, to avoid eye strain.
- (b) A more careful examination of the eyes of pupils to determine defects of vision and the presence of disease.
- (c) The training of all persons preparing to be teachers in the hygiene of the eye with special reference to the conservation of vision.

Third, that this committee urge upon the President of the United States and upon Congress that an appropriation be made, sufficiently large to enable the Bureau of Indian Affairs to eliminate trachoma on the Indian reservations, and that increased national appropriations be made to enable the United States Public Health Service to coöperate more fully with state boards of health in the elimination of trachoma.

Fourth, that this committee express its gratification over the fact that a great reduction has been brought about in the number of children made blind by babies' sore eyes, and over the fact that in many sections of the country trachoma has practically disappeared, due to the effective work of state and local boards of health, with the coöperation of local committees devoted to the prevention of blindness and the coöperation of the United States Public Health Service.

Fifth, it is the belief of this committee that each state should determine for itself the steps it should take to reduce blindness and conserve vision, and that the National Committee for the Prevention of Blindness does hereby pledge its assistance to any state wishing to undertake such work.

The account of the summer session of the George Peabody College for Teachers came too late for the October issue of THE NEWS LETTER, but it is of such great interest that it is included in this number.

In June and July, 1922, the George Peabody College for Teachers, Nashville, Tennessee, for the second year gave several courses on the education of the blind, which had the active coöperation of Superintendent Wampler, of the Tennessee School for the Blind, and which were attended by teachers from the South as well as from Kansas and Minnesota.

By request, twelve lessons, covering three weeks, or half the time of one of these courses, were devoted to Prevention of Blindness and the Sight-Saving Classes in the Public Schools. The teacher who conducted these lessons had spent many weeks of study in preparation for this course, taken a course of lectures on the subject, for which she received credit from Harvard, and made numerous visits to the sight-saving classes of Boston and vicinity, one of whose instructors arranged a set of sample lessons from her school to be used at Peabody College in illustration of the work.

All the available literature on the subject of Prevention and Sight-Saving was carried to Nashville as a part of the extensive amount of required reading which accompanied these courses; and charts of the eye and the many excellent illustrations in Posey's "Hygiene of the Eye" were used.

An examination, with credit, was given at the end of the course on "The Eye and its Common Diseases," in addition to one on the general subject of the course.

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The *Baltimore American* of November 19th stated that often when the medical examiner recommends glasses for school children, the parents are too poor to procure them and that various devices are being used by the teachers in an attempt (often, it must be conceded, futile) to relieve the eye-strain.

In several communities the Junior Red Cross is using a part of its funds to supply glasses in such cases. It may be that your community has this resource at its command and is not using it. If Junior Red Cross funds are not available, there is always some resource. That the sight of any child should be jeopardized for lack of glasses is a community responsibility.

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Dr. William L. Ettinger, Superintendent of Schools of the City of New York, is setting an example to other communities by taking drastic action to put a stop to a practice current in many schools: that of propping a bent pin or paper clip into the faces of unpopular students or

of teachers by means of a rubber band stretched between the first two fingers of the left hand.

These sling-shots, together with water pistols, air guns, putty blowers, etc., are often the cause of very serious eye accidents.

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#### CALIFORNIA

Dr. Edward F. Glaser, of the California State Board of Health, writes such a delightful and encouraging letter that readers will doubtless like to have his own words:

"Although you have not heard from us recently, we have not been neglectful of the cause. Let me try to give you a few items.

"First, and, as we think, most important, the San Francisco Board of Education established in April a conservation of vision class, the first of its kind in California. The Board of Education was fortunate to obtain as teacher Miss E. Franz, who had trained under Mr. Robert B. Irwin in Cleveland, Ohio. A properly illuminated and equipped room was arranged for. The San Francisco Board of Education realizes the necessity of conserving the vision of handicapped pupils and expects soon to have other classes.

"Second, during the past fiscal year the State Hygiene Laboratory of the State Board of Health distributed free over 40,000 ampules of the prophylactic to prevent ophthalmia neonatorum; also, the proper answering is insisted upon of the question on the birth certificate, 'Was a prophylactic for ophthalmia neonatorum used? If so, what?'—and rare the birth certificate upon which it is not properly answered!

"Third, the eye, ear, nose and throat section of the San Francisco Medical Society has established a conservation of vision committee, which has already taken up the study of school illumination with special reference to night schools, and is doing general educational preventive and conservation work."

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#### MAINE

The Maine Public Health Association is arranging for a state-wide campaign for the protection of eye-sight. The campaign will cover three phases: prevention of blindness in the newborn, the conservation of the eyes of children, and the prevention of eye accidents in industry.

Dr. A. O. Thomas, State Superintendent of Schools, has invited representatives of the association to give lectures at the state normal schools.

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#### MICHIGAN

Miss Roberta A. Griffith, Executive Secretary of the Grand Rapids Association for the Blind, writes: "I know it will be of interest that we have opened another sight-saving class. This is the first class in a parochial school; it is in charge of an enthusiastic young Sister who has been trained by us for this work. This is the fifth sight-saving class in Grand Rapids. We are very proud that three of our children have so improved

under the supervised working conditions that we were able to return them to the regular grade."

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#### OHIO

Miss Estella Lawes, supervisor of classes for conservation of vision of Cincinnati, writes:

"You will be interested to know that seven children have been returned to regular classes from this department since September. We have just finished our routine examinations and find that the vision of these children has been brought up above the limits of those needing special education."

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The Helen S. Trounstine Foundation has just issued a Handbook of Social Service Resources of Cincinnati and Hamilton County. In this is given a detailed account of 264 organizations and agencies having as their common purpose human helpfulness. The object of the book is to aid social workers by making available a knowledge of resources. It is interesting to note that conservation of vision classes are listed together with other agencies for preventive work.

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#### OREGON

The last quarterly of *Oregon's Health* states: "The first subject in the curriculum of the public schools should be health—the care of the body. Upon the development of the body depends the future happiness of every human being. A sound body and good health are the elements that build strong character."

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#### TEXAS

The local Red Cross secretary and the county nurse have completed a physical examination of the school children of Taylor; the findings show 35% of the pupils at least 10% under weight, 13% with defective vision, 16% with diseased eyelids, 36% needing attention to their teeth. The report states that the outlook is more encouraging than it was last year, and that the medical profession and the public are giving unusual co-operation.

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#### HONOLULU

The Territorial Medical Director's report on the health of the Island's pupils shows that 80% are in some way physically defective. The number of children examined totaled 42,645. Defective teeth were found in 15,588 cases, nose and throat trouble in 10,618, and eye trouble in 1890. In addition, the board of health oculist found 2½% of the children to be optically or aurally defective.

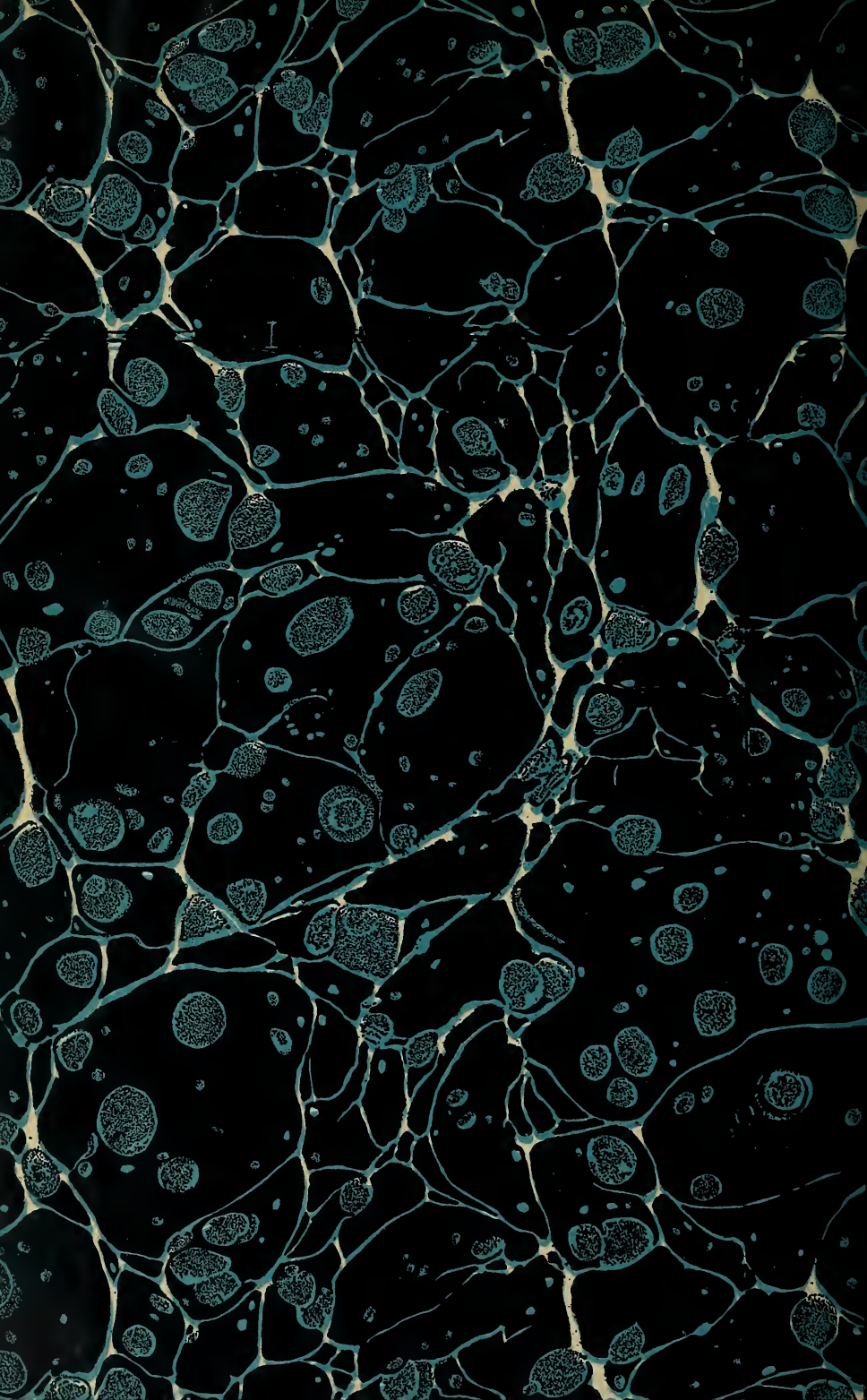
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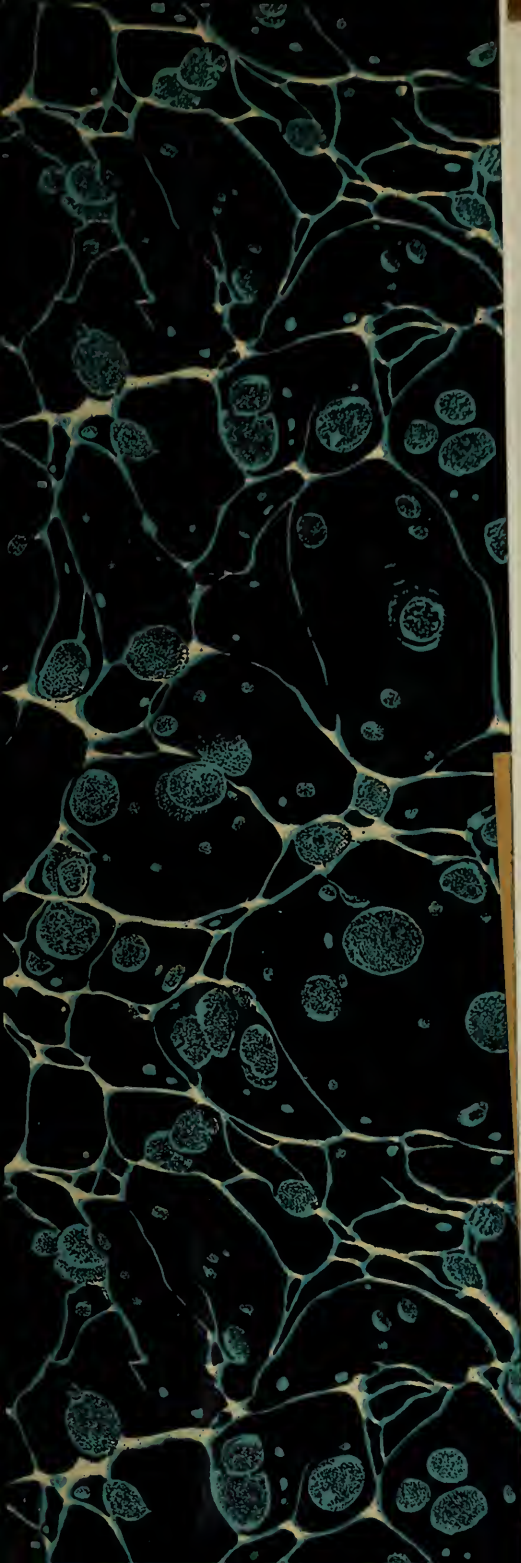
The statistics on the following page have been received from superintendents of schools and classes for the blind. Since many of these returns are based upon causes of blindness given by parents or guardians, they cannot be considered reliable from a medical standpoint.

PROPORTION OF PUPILS BLIND FROM OPHTHALMIA NEONATORUM IN  
FORTY-ONE SCHOOLS AND CLASSES FOR THE BLIND, 1921-1922

| Schools                                                     | Total Pupils,<br>1921-22 | Total Pupils Blind<br>from O.N. | Per Cent. | New Admissions,<br>1921-22 | New Pupils Blind<br>from O.N. | Per Cent. |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------|
| Arkansas School for the Blind.....                          | 100                      | 20                              | 20.0      | 21                         | 4                             | 19        |
| Colorado School for Deaf and Blind. . .                     | 58                       | 11                              | 19.0      | 14                         | 1                             | 7         |
| Conn. School for the Blind.....                             | 60                       | 9                               | 15.0      | 7                          | 0                             |           |
| Idaho State School for Deaf and Blind..                     | 19                       | 5                               | 26.3      | 4                          | 1                             | 25        |
| Illinois School for the Blind.....                          | 230                      | 69                              | 30.0      | 40                         | 7                             | 17        |
| Indiana School for the Blind.....                           | 143                      | 31                              | 21.7      | 28                         | 2                             | 7         |
| Iowa College for the Blind.....                             | 113                      | 26                              | 23.0      | 29                         | 6                             | 20        |
| Kansas School for the Blind.....                            | 99                       | 14                              | 14.1      | 14                         | 2                             | 14        |
| Kentucky School for the Blind.....                          | 123                      | 28                              | 22.8      | 21                         | 2                             | 9         |
| Louisiana State School for the Blind. . .                   | 70                       | 5                               | 7.1       | 21                         | 2                             | 9         |
| Maryland School for the Blind.....                          | 105                      | 30                              | 28.6      | 18                         | 1                             | 5         |
| Mississippi Institute for the Blind.....                    | 81                       | 14                              | 17.3      | 15                         | 3                             | 20        |
| Missouri School for the Blind.....                          | 118                      | 25                              | 21.2      | 35                         | 4                             | 11        |
| New Mexico Institute for the Blind. . .                     | 78                       | 30                              | 38.5      | 24                         | 11                            | 45        |
| N. Y. Inst. for Education of the Blind..                    | 126                      | 19                              | 15.1      | 32                         | 4                             | 12        |
| N. Y. State School for the Blind.....                       | 184                      | 32                              | 17.4      | 33                         | 1                             | 3         |
| N. C. Inst. for Deaf, Dumb and Blind..                      | 242                      | 81                              | 33.5      | 67                         | 19                            | 28        |
| North Dakota School for the Blind....                       | 35                       | 4                               | 11.4      | 4                          | 1                             | 25        |
| Ohio State School for the Blind.....                        | 290                      | 75                              | 25.9      | 35                         | 5                             | 14        |
| Oklahoma School for the Blind.....                          | 134                      | 29                              | 21.6      | 26                         | 4                             | 15        |
| Oregon State School for the Blind.....                      | 47                       | 1                               | 2.1       | 6                          | 0                             |           |
| Perkins Inst. & Mass. School for Blind..                    | 298                      | 63                              | 21.1      | 50                         | 6                             | 12        |
| South Dakota School for the Blind....                       | 35                       | 12                              | 34.3      | 5                          | 0                             |           |
| Tennessee School for the Blind.....                         | 159                      | 27                              | 17.0      | 35                         | 2                             | 5         |
| Texas State School for the Blind.....                       | 206                      | 63                              | 30.6      | 53                         | 5                             | 9         |
| Utah State School for Deaf and Blind..                      | 34                       | 5                               | 14.7      | 3                          | 0                             |           |
| Virginia School for Deaf and Blind....                      | 74                       | 2                               | 4.1       | 18                         | 1                             | 5         |
| Washington State School for Blind.....                      | 66                       | 8                               | 12.1      | 6                          | 0                             |           |
| Western Penn. Institution for the Blind                     | 146                      | 43                              | 29.5      | 16                         | 4                             | 25        |
| Wisconsin School for the Blind.....                         | 122                      | 38                              | 31.1      | 18                         | 2                             | 11        |
| Pupils in Classes for the Blind in<br>Public School Systems | 3,595                    | 819                             | 22.8      | 698                        | 100                           | 14        |
| Cal.—Los Angeles.....                                       | 14                       | 1                               | 7.1       | 5                          | 0                             |           |
| Ill.—Chicago.....                                           | 46                       | 8                               | 17.4      | 9                          | 2                             | 22        |
| Mich.—Detroit.....                                          | 20                       | 9                               | 45.0      | 7                          | 3                             | 42        |
| N. J.—Jersey City.....                                      | 9                        | 0                               | 0         | 3                          | 0                             |           |
| Newark.....                                                 | 24                       | 6                               | 25.0      | 5                          | 0                             |           |
| N. Y.—New York.....                                         | 117                      | 17                              | 14.5      | 17                         | 1                             | 5         |
| Ohio—Cincinnati.....                                        | 13                       | 5                               | 38.5      | 0                          | 0                             |           |
| Cleveland.....                                              | 57                       | 16                              | 28.1      | 10                         | 0                             |           |
| Toledo.....                                                 | 9                        | 0                               | 0         | 2                          | 0                             |           |
| Wis.—Milwaukee.....                                         | 28                       | 9                               | 32.1      | 0                          | 0                             |           |
| Racine.....                                                 | 4                        | 0                               | 0         | 0                          | 0                             |           |
| Grand Total.....                                            | 3,936                    | 890                             | 22.6      | 756                        | 106                           | 14        |







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